

A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

By

Rev. John Eagleson

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A
HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED IN
THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
OF
UPPER BUFFALO,

BY THE
Rev. John Eagleson, D. D.

THE PASTOR,

ON THE 22ND DAY OF JANUARY, A. D. 1860

THE TWENTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS MINISTRY
IN THE CHURCH.

WASHINGTON, PA.:

PRINTED BY ECKER AND DONEHOO, AT THE EXAMINER OFFICE,
1860.

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DISCOURSE.

DEUT., 8th chap., 2d verse : And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness.

These words were, at first, addressed to the children of Israel, in view of the close of their journey from Egypt to the Land of Promise. They had then time for reflection upon it, in its various windings, and in the great and numerous dangers through which they had been brought in safety. And they were required to employ it in this way.

The life of the Christian is a journey. It extends from the time of his conversion to that of his death, and leads from earth to heaven.

What was then true of the children of Israel, and is now true of the Christian, is also true of the Church. She is journeying from her militant to her triumphant state.

God is the *Leader* of his church and people. He leads them wisely, kindly, correctly, and safely. He leads, moreover, in the way *prescribed* in his Word—*pointed out* by his ministering servants—*opened up* by the developments of His providence, and *discovered* to us by the illuminating influences of His spirit.

The duty here enjoined upon us, in reference to this way, is, that we *remember* it. This we are to do by devoutly thinking and speaking of it, and by committing an account of it to writing.

Let us now endeavor to discharge this duty, by calling to mind the way in which the Lord has led this church, with special reference to the last twenty-six years.

It is but ninety-two years since this region of country was the property and home of uncultivated and barbarous savages, who claimed its exclusive occupancy. The tomahawk and scalping-knife were employed to exclude and repel the white man from the soil. In A. D. 1768, ninety-two years ago, the proper authorities of the colony of Pennsylvania purchased from the Indians all the territory extending westward to the Ohio and Allegheny rivers. Even before this purchase, a number of the white

population of the country had encroached on the domain of the Indians, by settling on their territory. But after the purchase the region began to be settled up more regularly and rapidly, and that, too, by an industrious and enterprising population, many of whom combined in their character the religious element in a high degree, and sought to make the best of their circumstances and advantages, both in a worldly and religious point of view.

In the years A. D. 1770 and 1771 many of the Scotch-Irish from Bedford and York counties, Pa., from the Kittatinny valley, Pa., from Virginia, and some directly from the North of Ireland, commenced settlements in this county. They had the physical strength, and untiring industry and enterprise, which qualified them to meet and overcome the difficulties of their situation, and to open up and improve the country. Moreover, the religious character which many of them possessed qualified them to be laid as foundation stones in the spiritual building of our western Zion.

The organization of a church is an event of transcendent interest and importance. If it is organized on Scriptural principles, it will be a pillar and ground of the truth—a light in the surrounding region—a means at once of temporal and eternal benefits. If it be organized on unscriptural principles, it will be a means of propagating error, and a medium, not only of injury, but of eternal ruin to the souls of men. We need not wonder, therefore, that the organization of a church excites so much interest in the hearts of the pious, who are connected with it.

The Gospel was first preached here in a grove west of where the village now stands. It is not known with precise accuracy when this church was organized; yet, from a comparison of dates, it is probable it was organized in May or June of A. D. 1779, eighty-one years ago. It is also probable that the first house of worship was erected during the same year. It was amongst the first houses which were built for public worship in the western country. It was located on ground now included in the grave-yard, near the north-west corner of it, and built in the log-cabin style of architecture. It was used as a meeting-house till the year A. D. 1798, a period of nineteen years. This included the entire period of the labors of the first pastor of the

church. Previous to the erection of that house, and during its continuance, in the summer season, the shady grove on the eastern slope of the hill, near where the sexton-house now stands, answered the purpose of a church, and a rudely constructed platform, called a tent, the purpose of a pulpit. And whether in the grove or in the log-cabin church, the God who dwells not exclusively in splendid and costly temples was propitious to their worship.

The first pastor of this church was the Rev. Joseph Smith. On the 21st day of June, A. D. 1779, a call was prepared for him, by the congregations of Upper Buffalo and Cross Creek jointly, in which each of the congregations agreed to pay him seventy-five pounds per annum, "during his regular incumbency among them as a gospel minister," or one hundred and fifty pounds, in the aggregate; which was equal to four hundred dollars of our United States money—a tolerably fair salary for the times. This call they prosecuted before the Presbytery of New Castle, with which Mr. Smith was connected. On the 27th day of October, A. D. 1779, he signified to the Presbytery his acceptance of said call; and during the month of December, A. D. 1780, he removed into the bounds of this congregation, and entered on the discharge of his duties as pastor of this church and Cross Creek. He continued to be the regular pastor of both churches to the time of his death, which occurred on the 19th day of April, A. D. 1792, in the eleventh year of his pastoral relation to this church, and in the fifty-sixth year of his age. His disease was inflammation of the brain. His residence was on the farm now owned by Parker Reed, and the mansion house on the ground on which his barn is located. At the time of his death, he was in good worldly circumstances.

Our fathers were accustomed to assemble here, for the worship of God, with musket and rifle in hand, as a means of protection against the Indians, their savage foes. Yet the Lord poured out his spirit upon, and revived his work among them, in a manner truly remarkable, even when confined in the forts, to which they had fled for defense. This was particularly the case in Vance's fort, in the bounds of the church of Cross Creek. When Mr. Smith came to this neighborhood it was a frontier settlement, and these dangers from savage foes had not yet passed

away. It pleased the Lord to attend his labors not only with the ordinary, but with the specially reviving influences of his spirit, as will appear from the following statement, taken from the *Western Missionary Magazine* (vol. I., page 287), which was published in Washington, Pa., in A. D. 1803:

“In the latter part of the year A. D. 1781 the Lord began a gracious work in the congregations of Cross Creek and Upper Buffalo, under the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Smith, about one year after he took the pastoral care of these congregations. During the winter season, week-day and night sermons and meetings for social worship were frequent, the assemblies numerous and attentive, and a considerable number under deep convictions, with frequent instances of new awakenings. The summer following was remarkable for the increase of the number of the awakened, although most labored long without relief. The few pious, who were in these infant congregations, were, at this time, earnestly engaged for additions to their number, and felt something of the pangs of travailing in birth for souls: much of the spirit of prayer was poured out. In the latter part of this summer, the work became more glorious and comfortable; numbers of the distressed souls obtained sweet deliverance, and, at the time the Lord’s Supper was administered in Buffalo, in the fall of A. D. 1783, about one hundred of the subjects of this good work were admitted to communion, and many were awakened on that solemn occasion. The awakening and hopeful conversion of sinners continued and increased through three or four years; nor was there much appearance of decline for six or seven after it began.

“Within this gracious season, there were many sweet, solemn sacramental occasions. The most remarkable of these was at Cross Creek, in the spring of the year A. D. 1787. It was a very refreshing season to the pious, a time of deliverance to a number of the distressed, and of awakening to many. The Monday evening was peculiarly and awfully solemn; some hundreds were bowed down and silently weeping, and a few crying out in anguish of soul. After the solemn dismissal of the assembly, most of the people remained on the ground. The scene was very remarkable; the pious were generally joyful and lively,

sinners greatly alarmed, and many deeply distressed. The people, unwilling to part, did not leave the place till an hour or more in the night, when they parted with an appointment to meet there again the next morning. Tuesday was, indeed, a solemn day. It was spent chiefly in exhortations and prayers by the Rev. Messrs. Smith, Dodd, and Cornwell. The effects of this gracious visitation were very comfortable, producing a good harvest of souls. Upwards of fifty in these congregations were added to the church at the communion the next fall.

“Nearly about the same time in which this gracious work began in these congregations, the divine influences were also poured out upon the congregations of Chartiers and Pigeon Creek, under the ministry of the Rev. John McMillan : many were awakened, and the pious much revived and quickened. There were a goodly number of judicious Christians in these congregations, who actively stepped forward in their proper places, and were very helpful in carrying on the good work. As many attended from considerable distances, with a great thirst for ordinances, it was thought expedient to have social meetings for prayer and exhortation on the Sabbath nights. They generally continued all the night; many attended, and conviction and conversion work went graciously on. Frequently the exercised could not suppress their feelings of joy or distress, but gave them vent in groans and cries. There were also frequently week-day and night sermons and societies, in different parts of the congregations. Thus this good work went on for several years; and it is believed that many were brought savingly to close with Christ in these congregations; and it is evident, from a trial of near twenty years, that the work is real and genuine with respect to some hundreds in these two charges above stated, many of whom are now faithful leaders, zealous and active Christians, and pillars in the church of Christ.

“In the same time, whilst this gracious work was going on in those places, the Lord also poured out his spirit on several other neighboring congregations, particularly Bethel and Lebanon, under the ministry of the Rev. John Clarke; Ten Mile, under the ministry of the Rev. Thaddeus Dodd; and King’s Creek and Mill Creek, then vacant congregations. In all of these places the power of God was graciously displayed, and many

souls gathered in, who have since given evidence, in their lives and conversation, that the work with them was a reality, and of divine origin."

Mr. Smith was a native of Nottingham, in the State of Maryland. His parents were natives of England. "In person he was tall and slender, of fair complexion, of a slight look askance of one eye." As a preacher, he was animated and impressive. He was gifted with a voice adapted to give expression to the *terrific* and *pathetic* in a manner truly remarkable. "When his theme was the terrors of the law, or the horrors of hell, or the glories of heaven, he appeared to many as if he had just come from the spirit-land. I never heard a man, said the Rev. Samuel Porter, who could so completely unbar the gates of hell, and make me look so far down into the dark, bottomless abyss, or like him, could so throw open the gates of heaven, and let me glance at the insufferable brightness of the great White ^{House} ~~House~~." As an instrument of God's own providing, he was wisely suited to the times in which he lived and the field in which he was called to labor. His remains lie interred in the burying-ground of this church, and he was probably the first minister of the Gospel who found a grave in the valley of the Mississippi.

After the death of Mr. Smith, the congregation was supplied by the Presbytery, for a time. On the 13th of June, A. D. 1794, the Rev. Thomas Marquis was ordained and installed pastor of the church of Cross Creek. In addition to his labors in Cross Creek, he acted as a stated supply, one-half of the time, to this church. This arrangement continued to the beginning of the year A. D. 1793, a period of three years, six months, and seventeen days. From that to the year 1826 he preached in Cross Creek the whole of the time, a period of about thirty-two years.

The second house of worship in this church was built in A. D. 1797, which was near the close of the ministry of Mr. Marquis in the church. During the next year it was in a state of readiness for the congregation to meet in for public worship; and it was occupied for that purpose for about forty-seven years. It was a large, hewed log-house, weather-boarded, plastered, and well pewed off, with a gallery, pewed off in like manner.

Mr. Marquis was a native of Virginia. He died peacefully

and triumphantly, on the 27th day of September, 1827, being upwards of seventy years of age. He was an eloquent and impressive preacher; and owing to the musical tones of his voice, he was frequently called "the silver-tongued Marquis." In his life he was useful, and in his death peaceful and happy. His mortal remains lie in the cemetery near to Bellefontaine, Logan county, Ohio.

From the beginning of the year A. D. 1798 the church, for about two years, was dependent on Presbyterial and transient supplies. In October, A. D. 1800, the Rev. John Anderson, D. D., accepted a call from the congregation to become their pastor; and immediately entered on his pastoral duties. He has left it on record, that, during the first two years of his ministry in this church, the apparent increase of religion among the people was but small; that in the summer of A. D. 1802 about twenty careless persons were convinced of their sin and misery, and that many of the pious were awakened out of carnal security and quickened in their Christian course, by the administration of the word and ordinances of God. This state of seriousness continued and increased till the time of the communion, which occurred on the 14th day of November, A. D. 1802. That was an occasion remarkable for the interest, solemnity and divine influences by which it was characterized, as will appear from the following account of it, and of the remarkable revival of religion with which it was connected, usually denominated "The Falling Work," taken principally from the *Western Missionary Magazine* (vol. I., p. 336).

"On Saturday, the 13th day of November, A. D. 1802, a greater concourse of people than had ever been seen before, at a meeting for divine worship in this country, assembled at Upper Buffalo meeting-house, in the congregation of the Rev. John Anderson, and formed an encampment in a semi-circle around the front of the tent, in a shady wood. The greater part had by this time learned the necessity of coming prepared to encamp on the ground, during the solemnity, as so many persons in distress could not be removed to lodgings in the evening; nor could such a multitude be accommodated in a neighborhood of the most hospitable inhabitants. On this occasion, it would have required one hundred houses, with perhaps one hundred or near-

ly to each house. But the people have been so engaged, that they are not disposed to separate in the evenings; therefore many brought wagons, with their families and provisions, with a great number of tents, which they pitched for their accommodation. The public exercises of devotion commenced at two o'clock with sermon, both in the meeting-house and at the tent, and were continued, with but short intermissions, until Tuesday evening. Fifteen ministers were present, all members of the Synod of Pittsburgh, and with cordial harmony took part in the various labors of the solemn season. The administration of the word and ordinances was accompanied with an extraordinary effusion of divine influences on the hearts of the hearers. Some hundreds were, during the season, convinced of their sin and misery; many of them sunk down and cried bitterly and incessantly for several hours. Some fell suddenly; some lost their strength gradually; some lay quiet and silent; some were violently agitated; and many sat silently weeping, who were not exercised with any bodily affections. Preaching, exhortations, prayers, and praises were continued alternately throughout the whole night in the meeting-house, which was crowded full, and also part of the night at the tent.

"There were some short intermissions, when the sound of the cries and groans of the distressed was so great as quite to drown a speaker's voice; at which times the ministers and others reputed for experience and wisdom in religion took opportunity to converse with the distressed, to discover the cause and nature of their complaints and cries, which pierced their ears and hearts from every quarter of the assembly, and administered such instructions and counsels as appeared to be suitable to their various cases.

"On the Sabbath morning, action sermons were preached, in the meeting-house and at the tent; and after the way was prepared at both places, the communicants from the house repaired to the communion table at the tent, where the holy ordinance was administered to nine hundred and sixty communicants. The solemn scene was conducted with as much regularity as usual, and with much solemnity and affection. The multitude of non-communicants, who could not hear at the tent, were called to the meeting-house and to a shady grove, where they were addressed

by several ministers, during the administration of the ordinance.

"The night was spent as the former had been: perhaps the only difference that appeared was in the numbers who were visibly pierced to the heart, and made to cry out, 'What shall we do?' and in the degree of their exercise, both of which greatly exceeded those of the preceding night. Between midnight and day-break, after a short intermission of public worship, when the congregation had become measurably silent, an exhortation was given to the distressed, directing them to Jesus Christ, and setting forth the fullness of his grace, his suitableness to all their wants, &c. This was done coolly and with plainness, suited to inform the mind—calmly, without moving tone or melting expressions; yet, instead of soothing their sorrows, or turning their cries into songs of joy, the very reverse took place. The speaker's voice was drowned in a greater cry of distress than was before heard. They appeared to listen with eagerness to the word of life; they strove to enter in at the door of hope, which free grace held open. They attempted to lean on Christ Jesus; but here they felt their spiritual blindness, hardness of heart, unbelief, enmity, &c. They could not come to Christ, unless the Father, who sent him, would draw them. These they felt in their inmost soul, and expressed with cries, which seemed to rend the heavens.

"On Monday, the whole assembly was addressed by one speaker from the tent. They were composed, solemn, and attentive, during the time of public worship. But after the blessing was pronounced, many were struck down in all parts of the congregation, and many more sat still, silently weeping over their miserable state as sinners, exposed to eternal wrath. The former could not be removed, at once; and while we waited on them, the number constantly increased. The latter, though they had bodily strength sufficient, yet were very unwilling to depart. Many of God's dear children were filled with peace in believing. They saw the spiritual glory, which the gracious presence of God had given to the solemnity. They rejoiced in hope, and waited to see and feel more of the efficacy of free grace. Others, sorrowful and thirsting for the water of life, wished to stay a little longer at the pool. The ministers, therefore, determined not to leave them, but to labor with diligence, while God was

making the word and ordinances effectual to the conviction and conversion of sinners. Not a few were awakened to a lively sense of their sin, during the evening and night, who have since obtained, as we may hope, pardon and peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. The exercises were continued till after sun-rise, on Tuesday morning, when the assembly was solemnly dismissed, and began, with apparent reluctance, to prepare to disperse. Notwithstanding that they had continued so long, and rested little, it appeared to be very difficult to separate and leave the place. After some time, the most removed, except the people of the congregation, who still tarried, lingering at the place where so much of God's power had been manifested to their eyes and in their consciences. Numbers, who had gone home to provide refreshment for their friends, returned. Still, they could not part. Numbers were struck down, whom they carried in; and all again collected in the meeting-house, where this day also was spent in preaching, exhortation, and prayer. The exercise was very powerful, and numbers were affected, who appeared to be unmoved before."

In the *Western Missionary Magazine*, for April, A. D. 1805, it is stated, that "fifty five persons, who are fruits of the revival, are added to the church. The addition of a number more is expected." In the same number of the *Magazine*, it is also stated, that the number admitted in twelve congregations, in the bounds of the Presbytery of Ohio, to which this church belonged, since the work began, amounts to five hundred and sixty-two—an average of about forty-seven to each congregation.

This revival was much opposed, particularly by the ministers and members of the religious denomination called Seceders, by whom it was denounced as a delusion, as a work of the Devil, and as a judgment sent on the Presbyterian churches for using Watts' Psalms and Hymns. (*Western Missionary Magazine*, vol. II., pp. 30-31.) These objections to the revival have long since been refuted by the pure and consistent lives of its numerous converts, the most of whom bore the burden and heat of the day, whilst they lived, and now rest from their labors, in the Celestial Paradise. It will be well for the church and the world, if their children and children's children be as pious and useful as they were. There were other seasons of special revival, du-

ring the ministry of Dr. Anderson ; but of them we are not now able to speak particularly.

At his own request, presented on account of declining health, his pastoral relation to this church was dissolved, by the Presbytery of Washington, on the 18th day of June, 1833. After this, his health continued to decline, during which time it was his frequently expressed wish, that he might not long be laid aside as "old and useless church lumber." On the 31st day of January, 1835, he departed this life, in the faith and hope of the Gospel, which he had so long preached to others, aged sixty-seven years, having been pastor of this church thirty-two years and eight months. His disease was asthma, under which he had labored for many years.

In person, Dr. Anderson was tall and slender. "In character, he was a man of very humble pretensions, but of sterling worth. He had a clear and vigorous mind, capable of making accurate discriminations. He was esteemed a good theologian, and superintended the studies of a number of young men for the Gospel ministry. As a preacher, he was close and searching, simple and pungent in his method of exhibiting and enforcing divine truth. He was an active friend of missions in the West. Besides being a member of the Board of Trust of the Western Missionary Society, and aiding in the ordinary business of the Board, he performed several journeys to the missionary stations on the North-western frontier."* He was also amongst the first to move in the great Temperance Reformation. "His piety was of the most undoubted character, and his labors were owned of God for the conversion of many souls." On the 27th day of September, A. D. 1821, he received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Washington College, Pa. Although not distinguished as a domestic financier, yet he was in good worldly circumstances at the time of his death. He owned and lived on the farm on which Alexander Hamilton now resides. His mortal remains lie interred in the grave-yard of this church, and this congregation erected over them a suitable monument, as a mark of respect for their old pastor, who had worn himself out in their service. His voice has been hushed to silence for al-

* See Elliott's Life of Macurdy.

most a quarter of a century ; and what numbers of those to whom he preached sleep with him in the silent field of the dead ! O ! what a solemn day will that be, when he and all to whom he here preached the Gospel shall appear, at the bar of Christ, for final judgment !

After the resignation of Dr. Anderson, the church was, for several months, dependent on Presbyterial and other transient supplies.

The present pastor, who is a native of Harrison county, Ohio, was licensed to preach the Gospel on the 8th day of January, A. D. 1833, a little over twenty-seven years since. On the 19th day of January, A. D. 1834, he preached his first sermon in this congregation—twenty-six years ago on last Thursday : and from that time to the present he has shared in your friendship and support, and even in your forbearance, in view of imperfections—for all of which you have his grateful acknowledgements. The first discourse, referred to, was founded on the following words, contained in 1st Cor., 1st cap., 23d verse, first clause : “But we preach Christ crucified.” And, whilst he has sought to diversify his ministrations with illustrations derived from the arts and sciences ; from the ethics, economics, and politics of men ; from history, natural, sacred, and profane, and even from the range of illustrative anecdotes, yet he has aimed to make Christ crucified his great theme in preaching to you the Gospel.

On the 2d day of June, A. D. 1834, a call was regularly prepared by this church, the Rev. Thomas Hogue presiding in the meeting. This call was prosecuted before the Presbytery of Beaver, and accepted on the 14th day of October, A. D. 1834 ; and on the 24th day of December, A. D. 1834, he was ordained and installed pastor of this church—twenty-five years ago on the 24th day of last December. Shortly before the day appointed for the ordination and installation, the ruling elders of the church, at that time, set apart a day, to be observed as a day of special prayer to God for his blessing upon the pastoral relation, the formation of which was then in progress and near prospect. The present speaker was invited to join them in these devotions ; and the day was accordingly spent in the manner specified. The prayers of that solemn day were, I have no doubt, recorded in heaven, and have since been answered, in part, in the descent

of some mercy drops on this Hill of Zion; and we fondly hope that they will yet be more fully answered, in the descent of more copious and refreshing showers. With but one exception, all those men, who were even then venerable for their years, their integrity of character and piety, have gone "the way of all the earth," and they now repose, as we confidently trust, in the mansions of the blessed.

During the last twenty-six years this congregation has sent a large emigration to other sections of the Church, particularly to the West, ; yet it has had a slow, but substantial growth. We have often thought that we ought to be thankful for ordinary divine influences, and even "for the day of small things." During the most of this time, meetings for social prayer have been kept up regularly in five or six districts in the congregation.

This church has also, during this period, been blessed with several precious revivals of religion, by which Christians were quickened in their Master's service, and a number hopefully converted and gathered into the Church. The first of these was in A. D. 1835. The Lord seemed gradually to have prepared the way for his coming to many of the churches throughout the Synod of Pittsburgh, with which we were then connected. In October of A. D. 1834 the Synod met in Steubenville. The meeting was remarkably harmonious and pleasant. There was manifestly a special divine influence pervading the Synod. This manifested itself in the conversation and prayers of the members, in the transaction of business, and in expressions of solicitude for the revival of religion in their own hearts and in the churches. Even incidental occurrences seemed to favor serious impressions. Among these I might notice the short farewell address of the Rev. Dr. Anderson, in which he took occasion to allude to the many pleasant meetings of the Synod through which he had passed, and to exhort the younger members to greater zeal, fidelity, and energy in their Master's work. His tall figure, emaciated and venerable form, and trembling limbs, all combined to favor the solemn impression; so that, when he bid a final adieu to the Synod and left the house, the most unfeeling were moved to tears. Doubtless many of the junior members formed resolutions in accordance with his appropriate fare-

well exhortations. Not a few of the members left the place of meeting with the confident and even expressed belief, that the Lord had special mercy in store for the churches during the succeeding synodical year, and, on their return to their respective charges, engaged in laboring, with that zeal and energy which result from confidence and hope. Nor were their prayers and labors in vain. The Lord poured out his spirit extensively on the churches in the bounds of the Synod. In those influences, the churches in the bounds of the Presbytery of Washington shared largely. With others, this church shared in the special influences of God's spirit and grace. As the result of these influences, and the means of grace used under them, thirty-one members were added to the communion of the church, on examination, at the time of the administration of the Lord's Supper, on the 22d day of June, 1835. As large a proportion of those admitted at that time as is usual, it is presumed, have continued to maintain a consistent Christian profession. Some of them, even many years since, were called to enter into their eternal rest, through the medium of a peaceful and happy death.

In A. D. 1853, this church was again favored with the specially reviving and converting influences of God's spirit and grace. The Presbytery of Washington, at their meeting in October, A. D. 1853, being impressed with the solemn truth, that the state of perishing sinners around us, the interests of the church and glory of God demand a more active state of piety in our churches, made this important subject a matter of special consideration and prayer. As the result of their deliberations, they recommended, that the ministers labor together, two and two, preaching and keeping up meetings for a number of days in succession. The Presbytery even went so far as to appoint those ministers who should labor together. Into this arrangement our church entered, devoutly and prayerfully. The Lord gave the reviving and converting influences of his spirit; and the result was, that at the administration of the Lord's Supper, on the 15th day of May following, twenty-six persons were received into the communion of the church, on examination, and the active piety of the church promoted. It is probable, also, that some were more and more hardened; and, possibly, some even sealed over to eternal damnation. At that time, extensive

and powerful revivals were enjoyed by a number of other churches in our Presbytery.

Another season of special religious interest and power was enjoyed in this church, in the latter part of the year 1856, and the former part of the year 1857. At their meeting in the fall of A. D. 1856, the Synod of Wheeling, impressed with the importance of a revived state of religion in the churches, set apart a day to be spent in special prayer to God, for the revival of His work. They also recommended that, in connection with this day of concert in prayer, or as soon after as practicable, a series of religious meetings be held in each church within their bounds, with a view of bringing the claims of Christ and religion closely and continuously before the minds both of Christians and of impenitent sinners. Into this arrangement, we in this church entered with entire cordiality. The Lord gave the quickening and converting influences of his spirit, so that at our next communion, which was about the 9th day of March, nineteen persons were added to the church, on examination. Similar divine and reviving influences were enjoyed by a number of other churches in the bounds of the Presbytery, about the same time.

During the years A. D. 1857, 1858, and a part of the year 1859, a cloud of mercy passed over our country, and poured down the most genial and refreshing showers—producing a revival of religion, such as has not been enjoyed since the great reformation of the sixteenth century; if, indeed, since the time of the Apostles. Though late in its transit, a small wing of that cloud passed over us, and shed a few mercy-drops on this hill of Zion, resulting in the addition of eleven persons to the communion of the church, on examination, at the administration of the Lord's Supper, on the 14th of March following. That cloud, like those of nature, has gone eastward, and is even yet pouring down its genial showers in Ireland, causing not only Dublin and Belfast, but all the northern portion of the island, to resound with songs of salvation. And the missionary spirit, as it warms and expands the bosom of the true-hearted Irishman, is fast propagating those benign influences throughout the southern and more benighted portion of that land. Thence, it has passed to Wales, to Scotland, and to England, watering the thirsty lands, and rendering alike the palatial church and coal-pit vocal

with songs of praise. Thence it veered northward to Sweeden, and is now hovering over Lapland, warming into life, by its refreshing showers, the chilled and blighted spiritual vegetation of that bleak and frozen land.

In reference to the general character of the religious experience of those who were hopefully converted, during the seasons of revival referred to, I think it proper to say that, when under the convincing influences of the spirit of God, their distress arose from a sense of their depravity of nature, of their hardness of heart, of their indisposition and consequent inability to come to God, to repent of their sins, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and from a sense of their sins, particularly as committed against the love and grace of God, and exposure to the awful denunciations of his holy law. And, on the other hand, the peace and comfort of those who obtained relief did not arise from a persuasion that their hearts and lives were less offensive to God, or that they had done anything to commend them to the favor of God, but from Scriptural evidence of a change of heart, manifesting itself in new and different views of, and feelings in reference to divine and spiritual things. This evidence gathered strength from their hatred of sin, their love to Christ, and the plan of salvation by grace; from their love to God as a holy, righteous, and benevolent sovereign; from love to his word, to his law, to his church and people; from solicitude for the salvation of others, and sincere resolutions to lead lives of new and holy obedience. During the seasons of grace referred to, frequent opportunities were afforded for personal conference with those who were serious, with a view of guiding them to the Savior, and guarding them against entertaining false and delusive hopes. It is a solemn reflection, that, whilst a number, during those seasons, were sealed as the heirs of glory, a few may have been sealed over to everlasting ruin, although they may still linger beneath the droppings of the sanctuary. In addition to these seasons of special reviving, we have had others of more than our ordinary religious interest and ingathering. Among these, I mention the years 1841, 1843, 1847, 1853, and 1854.

During the last twenty-six years, four hundred persons have been received into the communion of this church; and although, at different times, there have been cases of alienation between

individuals and families, yet the church has enjoyed a degree of brotherly love and harmony for which we should be thankful to the God of peace and love. Let us ever foster the spirit of love and peace in our bosoms, and within these sacred walls. Though the usefulness of the speaker has fallen far below his ardent wish and prayer, yet he can honestly say, that in summer and winter, by day and by night, by sunlight and by lamplight, he has labored for your benefit and salvation to the extent of his ability.

In the discharge of his ministerial duties, he has preached two thousand three hundred and thirty-six sermons, and attended meetings for prayer, and visited individuals and families, without recorded number.

The ruling elders in this church, at the commencement of the present pastoral relation, were John Gilcrest, William Wallace, John Dinsmore, John McWilliams, James McConahey, Robert Caldwell, William Smiley, and David McComb—all of whom, with but one exception, have been transferred, as we trust, from the church on earth to the church in heaven. We shall see their venerable forms, and hear their supplicating voices in prayer, no more within these sacred walls. In their removal, we have an admonition to be diligent, “that we may be found of God in peace, without spot, and blameless.” In addition to these, the following persons had sustained the office of ruling elder in the church, but had either died or removed from the church before the year A. D. 1834, viz.: William Smiley, John Johnson, William McCullough, William Hughes, John Cowen, James Dinsmore, Robert Lyle, James Brice, William Patterson, ^{Pro. Elder} and David Rannells—all of whom have finished their earthly course, and entered into their eternal rest. So transient is man’s existence upon earth! One generation but precedes another to the grave. There are others amongst us advanced far towards the outer verge of human life, and must, ere long, follow those that have preceded them to the grave.

On the 9th day of January, A. D. 1840, James Taggart, Parker Reed, Andrew Herron, and Samuel Donahey were ordained to and installed in the office of ruling elder in this church; and on the 25th day of September, A. D. 1853, Ezekiel Davis, William Donahey, and Robert Sloan were ordained and installed in like manner.

The congregation was incorporated, according to an Act of Assembly, on the 29th day of March, A. D. 1804, under the administration of Thomas McKean, as Governor of the State. The first trustees under the act of incorporation were James Taggart, Sr., David Boyd, Alexander Hunter, William McComb, John Flack, Matthew Morrow, James Dinsmore, John Gilchrest, and William Hughes.

The present house of worship was built in the year A. D. 1845. It is located on the same ground on which the second house stood. It was dedicated to the service of Almighty God on Sabbath, the 26th day of October, A. D. 1845. The sermon was preached by the present pastor, from the following words, contained in the 7th chap. of 2d Chron., 1st verse: "Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the Lord filled the house." The day was pleasant, and a large audience in attendance. During the summer, in which the present house was built, the congregation worshipped in the open air, at a tent erected in a shady grove, a few rods east of the lecture-room.

The lecture-room was raised on the 29th day of April, A. D. 1845, and, although in an unfinished state, was first occupied for public worship on the 11th day May following, and was completed before winter.

Such is the way in which the Lord has led this church, from its organization, amid the dangers connected with the border warfare of ruthless savages, to the present time. Our fathers and predecessors actually beheld, and we now reflect upon the pleasing change, in which the war-whoop of the blood-thirsty Indian gave place to the songs of salvation—the tomahawk and scalping-knife to the benign and saving influence of the sword of the spirit—the festivities of the war-dance to those of our holy religion, amidst scenes of extensive and powerful revival, as well as those of its ordinary solemnities. What an influence for good has resulted from the dispensation of the word of God and ordinances of religion here, during the period of three generations! The history of this church is characterized by a comingling of light and shade—by ingatherings associated with conversions and Christian professions, and solemn removals by

death. How thankful should we be that the church still exists, with capabilities of being a light in the world! And how solicitous should we be to meet our responsibilities, and perform well our duties, in order that we may finish our course with joy!

Let us also call to mind, briefly, the way in which the Lord has led that branch of the Presbyterian Church, in this land, with which we are connected. The first Presbyterians of our communion came from Scotland, Ireland, England, and New England. The first Presbyterian ministers in the American colonies were John Hampton and Francis McKemie—the former a native of Ireland, and the latter of Scotland. They were sent out and sustained by an association in the city of London. They located in Accomac county, Virginia, between the Delaware and Chesapeake bays. The Episcopal Church had been established, by law, in the colony of Virginia, and legal provision made for the support of an Episcopal minister in every parish. In addition to this, the ministers of all other denominations were prohibited, by law, from preaching within the bounds of the colony. The preachers of this new and foreign religion were looked upon not only as innovators in matters of religion, but as violators of the laws of the colony. They were accordingly arrested and cast into prison, where they remained in confinement for two months. On their discharge from prison, they went to the eastern part of the colony of Maryland, where they continued to preach, and organized the first Presbyterian churches in the American colonies.

The first Presbytery in the American colonies, which was that of Philadelphia, was organized in A. D. 1704; and in A. D. 1716, the ministers and churches, having increased rapidly, divided themselves into four Presbyteries, called New Castle, Philadelphia, Long Island, and Snow Hill, and organized the first Synod, called the Synod of Philadelphia.

The standard of the Presbyterian Church, at the time it was organized in America, was the *Scriptures* and the *customs* that had been in use. This arrangement was found not to be sufficiently definite to secure harmony in doctrine, and in church order and discipline. Accordingly, in A. D. 1739, the Synod passed what has been usually styled "*The Adopting Act*"—by which that body adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith

and Catechisms, as containing the system of doctrines taught in the sacred Scriptures, and required these instruments to be adopted by every candidate and every actual minister, and by ruling elders at the time of their ordination.

Under this arrangement, the Church continued rapidly to increase; and, as the Church increased, by accessions, not only from different parts of our own country, but from other countries, diversities of views prevailed, in part, in reference to *doctrine*, and, in part, in reference to *church order*. Those who were strict Presbyterians, according to the Westminster basis, were denominated "*Old Lights*," and those who favored the new views of doctrine and church order were denominated "*New Lights*." These new views were agitated, producing some degree of strife and alienation, until, in A. D. 1741, our Church was rent into two parts, forming two separate denominations of Presbyterians. The "*New Lights*" formed the Synod of New York, and identified themselves with it, whilst the "*Old Lights*" continued to adhere to the old Synod of Philadelphia. This division ran down through Presbyteries, churches, and families, producing some degree of alienation and strife, so far as it extended. In this division, it was generally felt that there were wrongs on both sides.

After a lapse of eight years, the Synod of New York made the first advances towards conciliation; and, after nine years of negotiation, both Synods were happily united, under the title of "The Synod of New York and Philadelphia." This happy union took place in A. D. 1758. The one hundredth anniversary of this union was celebrated in the First Presbyterian Church in the city of New Orleans, by the General Assembly, during their meeting in that place, in the month of May, A. D. 1858—at which celebration it was the privilege of the speaker to be present. Under this union the Church was greatly prospered, and prepared to fulfill her important mission, in sustaining and advancing, not only the interests of morality and religion, but those of liberty and independence, during the progress of the Revolutionary war.

After the close of the war of the Revolution, and the union of the United Colonies under a Republican Constitution and form of government, it was deemed proper to enter into

some arrangements adapted to the new state of things in the country. This resulted in the organization of the General Assembly. Accordingly, the first General Assembly met in the city of Philadelphia, in May, A. D. 1789. The number of ministers at that time in the Church was two hundred and fifty, who were divided into four Synods and about twenty Presbyteries.

After the organization of the General Assembly, the Church increased rapidly for a long series of years. But large accessions, not only from all parts of our own country, but from other countries, together with a reckless spirit of metaphysical speculation, which was rife as a characteristic of the age, introduced diversities of views, alike in reference to doctrine and church order. These diversities of views produced such discussions and strife, as resulted in a division of the church. This division took place in the city of Philadelphia, on the 17th day of May, A. D. 1838, by the secession of the New School portion of the General Assembly from the Old School portion of that body.

Since that division, the Old School branch of the church has been favored with great prosperity and increase, so that it is now, by far, the most numerous, important, and influential body of Presbyterians in the world. Then we had but 1,243 ministers, 192 licentiates, 175 candidates for the ministry, and 128,043 communicants. Now we have 2,577 ministers, 297 licentiates, 493 candidates for the ministry, 279,630 communicants, and 3,487 churches. Then the churches contributed for Domestic Missions, \$33,989; for Foreign Missions, \$51,307; for Education, \$27,416; for Theological Seminaries, \$9,664, and for other purposes, \$12,059—in all, \$134,435. During the last year, the churches contributed for the Boards and Church Extension, \$542,695, and for miscellaneous purposes, \$221,973. They also contributed \$2,070,479 for congregational purposes—making, in all, \$2,835,147.

The Presbyterian Church has been blessed with extensive and powerful revivals of religion, in all periods of her history, particularly for a number of years preceding and following the union of A. D. 1758; by which the tide of infidelity was rolled back, which, at that time, set in upon the country, with great violence, from France and other European countries. Also, an extensive revival prevailed shortly after the Revolutionary war,

by which the demoralizing influence of the war was, in a great measure, corrected. And our branch of the church shared largely in the great revival, which has prevailed during the last three years, preparing the churches, in this and ~~the~~ other lands, as we trust, for the great conflict, which is to precede the conversion of the world to God. May she be fully prepared for her mission, in its towering grandeur and far-reaching influences, alike in reference to our country and the world, and shine forth in the purity of her doctrine and activity of her piety, amidst the splendors of the millenium. Imbued with the spirit of true Christianity, she knows no East, no West, no North, no South; but, with her thousands of tongues, proclaims the Gospel alike in the North and in the South, both to the bond and the free; alike in the palatial churches of the East, and in the log cabins and over the wide-spreading prairies of the West. And, by her missionary agencies, she is planting churches and extending her influences, not only among the Indian tribes of North America, but in India, in China, in Africa, and in the islands of the sea—causing “the wilderness and solitary places to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose.”

In this connection, it seems appropriate to take a brief survey of the other branches of the great and wide-spread Presbyterian family of churches, in this and in other countries. We begin with those of the

UNITED STATES.*

The Presbyterian Church of the New School has 1,558 ministers, 1,543 churches, and 137,939 communicants.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church has 927 ministers, 1,188 churches, and 84,249 communicants.

The Reformed Dutch Church and the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church have each about 410 ministers, about 409 churches, and about 50,000 communicants.

The United Presbyterian Church has 408 ministers, 634 churches, and 55,547 communicants.

The United Synod of the Presbyterian Church has 118 ministers, 187 churches, and 12,125 communicants. This Church is an off-shoot from the New School General Assembly.

* For more full statistics, see the Presbyterian Historical Almanac, for 1860.

The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian, or Covenanter Church of the old side has 63 ministers, 70 churches, and 5,821 communicants.

The General Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, or Covenanter Church of the new side has 54 ministers and 83 churches.

The Free Presbyterian Church has 43 ministers.

The Associate Synod of North America has 11 ministers, 3 Presbyteries, and 32 churches. These are the part of the Associate, or Seceder Church, which did not go into the union, which was formed with a large part of the Associate Reformed, or Union Church, in the City Hall of Pittsburgh, on the 22d day of May, A. D. 1858.

The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of the South has 68 ministers.

The Associate Reformed Synod of New York has 2 Presbyteries, 16 ministers, 14 churches, and 1,631 communicants. This is the part of the Associate Reformed, or Union Church, which did not go into the union just referred to.

The German Reformed Church has 360 ministers, 1,013 churches, and 73,410 communicants.

From the United States, we pass to the

BRITISH PROVINCES OF NORTH AMERICA.

The Free Church of Nova Scotia has 32 ministers, 66 churches, and 1,497 communicants.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, in connection with the Church of Scotland has 107 ministers, 135 churches, and 8,011 members.

The Presbyterian Church in New Brunswick has 18 ministers.

The Presbyterian Church of Canada has 183 ministers, 144 churches, and 17,716 members.

The Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia has 38 ministers, 75 churches, and 7,133 communicants.

The Synod of New Brunswick, in connection with the Church of Scotland, has 11 ministers.

The Synod of Nova Scotia, in connection with the Church of Scotland, has 20 ministers, 24 churches, and 1,642 communicants.

The United Presbyterian Church in Canada has 66 ministers, and 119 churches.

Thence we pass to the sea-girt isles of

GREAT BRITAIN.

The Church of Scotland has 1,173 ministers and 1,183 churches.

The Eastern Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland has 9 ministers.

The Free Church of Scotland has 790 ministers, and 809 churches.

The Presbyterian Church of Victoria, in Australia, has 137 ministers.

The Presbyterian Church of England has 88 ministers.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has 560 ministers.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland has 29 ministers.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland has 39 ministers.

— The Seceding Presbyteries of Ireland have 10 ministers.

The Synod of Jamaica has 25 ministers.

The Synod of the Church of Scotland, in England, has 15 ministers.

The United Original Seceders of Scotland have 23 ministers.

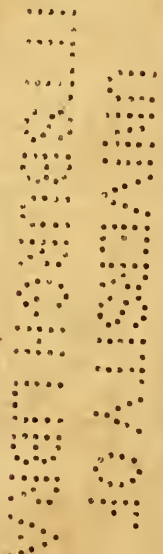
The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland has 519 ministers, and 877,052 communicants.

We might pass over to the continent of Europe and view the pious descendants of the Heugénots, whose blood once flowed profusely, in martyrdom for the truth; the renowned church of the Waldenses, and the Calvinistic and Reformed Churches on the continent, all of which are Presbyterian in their character.— There are not less than eleven thousand ministers, and a million and a half of communicating members connected with the churches of the Presbyterian family. May they all soon be united in one great and harmonious province of Christ's kingdom, and shine forth, in connection with all other departments of it, whilst the sun and moon shall endure.

It is with mournful pleasure that we reflect on the changes produced by the last twenty-six years. Where are the venerable fathers and mothers who then walked the aisles and occupied

the pews in the old church? They are nearly all gone to their long home—and children are grown up to occupy their places. Then I came amongst you a stranger, and, from that to the present time, have associated with you, in your families, in your social circles, in your marriage festivities, in the rooms of sickness and of death, and in your meetings for prayer and the public worship of the sanctuary. I have participated with you alike in your joys and in your sorrows. With you, have I hung the harp upon the willows in the dark vale of affliction; and with you, have I sung the songs of salvation on the luminous heights of Zion. With pastoral care have I nursed the parents and grand-parents of many of you, in the feebleness of declining age, down to the tomb. Not only have I attended to the grave many who were venerable with years, but others cut off in the prime of manhood, in the bloom of youth, and in helpless infancy. If, at any time, feelings have been wounded, in our intercourse with each other, let those things be buried in oblivion; and let the tender plants of brotherly kindness grow and bloom in the garden of our hearts, that they may bring forth their genial fruits in our fellowship with each other. Let it appear that we are all one in Christ.

Whilst the past is traced on the tablet of memory, the future is to us all unknown; yet we have ground for confidence in reference to it, for we know "that the vail which covers the face of futurity has been woven by the hand of mercy. Let us not seek to lift that vail, lest sadness may be seen to shade the brow, which fancy has arrayed in smiles of gladness."



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